Media and Gun Rights

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ABSTRACT: This paper talks about the different ideas the media portrays about gun rights and gun control after events like the mass shooting at Sandy Hook. Different media sources have different views on events. Channels like *Fox News* and *The Washington Post* are usually more conservative and channels like *CNN* and *The Huffington Post* are usually more liberal.

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Do you have a stand? Not on anything in particular, but a stand? Where do you get your information to make you feel confident enough to make a stand? Well one place that a lot of people get their information from the media. They let us know about new and current events that are happening in your home town to around the world. You have pry seen different news reports on the same event but yet the reports seam completely different. Well before the media reports the news they have time to come up with some of their own ideas about the event. To give you a better understanding, channels like *Fox News* and *The Washington Post* are usually more conservative and channels like *CNN* and *The Huffington Post* are usually more liberal. How does the media portray things like gun control after events like the mass shooting in Sandy Hook Elementary School?

This mas shooting was Newtown, Connecticut on December 14, 2012. The Shooter was a 20 year-old that went into Sandy Hook Elementary School and killed twenty Students all between the age of six and seven, six school staff members, and then committed suicide. Before going to the school he also shot his mother in their home in Newtown. This shooting was the deadliest school mass shooting in the U.S. and the second most deadly mass shooting done by a single person.

One view that the media portrays after Sandy Hook is that we should ban everyone from owning guns. If nobody has guns then you can’t hurt anybody, right? Well CNN (2015) states that people “have taken the fight for new and stronger gun laws” (par 11). They also state that “2 million American children live in homes with unsecured guns” (par 9). They believe that if you make it harder for people to get their hands on guns by limiting the amount of guns they can purchase and by making more laws to regulate who gets to own guns that will solve all the problems. They state that “six states have passed new background check laws” Since Sandy Hook (par 12). These laws are not bad laws to have. To go now to buy a shot gun, all you need to do is fill out a form. All it does is just registers that gun to your name. Someone can walk away with the gun the same day. You don’t need to have a background check done for someone to buy a shot gun. There might be people that are mentally unstable or that are just shotgun hillbillies out there with a gun. Another thing that they are trying to push for is to have “major retailers and restaurant chains such as Target, Starbucks, Chipotle, Sonic, Chili’s and Jack in the Box to establish gun sense policies and prohibit open carry of guns in their locations” (par 10). What they are trying to get them to do is to discourage people from having that feeling of needing to have a gun with you at all times and hopefully making it a safer place.

These laws would help make it so only certain people that have been cleared safe to use a gun to be able to have a gun. In theory, having less guns and only having responsible people with guns would solve all our problems in a perfect world. I’m sorry to say but we do not live in a perfect world. Even if we make it so that certain people are prevented to own guns, that doesn’t mean that they won’t be able to get their hands on a gun. There is always a loop-hole. People can get guns from the black market or that sketchy pink van out back behind Walmart.

Another idea that basically the media portrays is that we should be putting more armed guards in the schools. The Big Story (2015) says that many places are having the “idea of having a trained, law-abiding gun owner present.” The reason for that is the idea that “gun-free zones are magnets for bad guys” (par 9). If there are more guards with guns present then it will hopefully discourage mass shootings at schools. They also say States such as Indiana and Mississippi have already passed laws to “beef up the presence of police officers in schools” (par 15). Hopefully with the presence of more armed guards protecting our school will make these bad people think twice before trying to take on a small army. Even states that haven’t passed this law yet are putting a few security guards into the school systems. Even if it is only a single police officer in a school, they still have a presence there and control a situation if one does arise. The only problem to this plan is that with all the armed guards walking around is that it might make someone that is armed in the school more edgy and possibly more antsy to pull the trigger.

A more conservative idea that the media portrays is that we should ban all automatic guns and get rid of high capacity magazines. The Huffington Post (2015) did some research and they found out that “at least 555 children under the age of 12 have been shot to death since Sandy Hook, a rate about one kid every other day” (par 9). Fox News (2012) states that that we should pass a bill to “stop the sale of more than 100 assault weapons” (par 14). They also say that we should have a “renewal of the assault-weapons ban that expired in 2004” (par 13). A bill was passed later on in 2015 to re-introduce the assault-weapon. The assault-weapon ban is to stop the manufacturing and sales of assault rifles for civilian use. In a reality, what civilians are going to need an assault rifle? It’s not like you can use it to hunt with to mow down a herd of dear or a flock of ducks. The only reason that anyone should own an assault rifle is if you were a gun collector or a museum.

The second part of this idea is that we need to not make any magazines that can hold more than ten shots. So instead of having the ability to shoot 30 shots and killing lots of people they are limited to only 10 shots or so to inflict less damage. This was also included as part of the assault rifle ban in 2015. Some companies make magazines that can hold somewhere around 600 rounds. There is not much of a civilian use for a 600 round magazine for an assault rifle. Maybe for a new form of lumber jack that cut down trees by blowing through them with bullets. A reporter from fox news said “I don’t think the Founding Fathers had the idea that every man, women and child could carry an assault weapon” (par 29). The Founding Fathers probably didn’t have a thought in their minds that we would be able to shoot more than one shot a minute let alone a 10 per second. That being said, they still thought that people should be able to own a gun for their own protection.

On the other hand, some of the media portrays that we need to loosen up on all the gun laws. The Washington Post (2014) says that “firearms laws at the national level and in many states have loosened” (par 2). So instead of tightening down on gun control, they suggest that we should have fewer laws when buying firearms more people can have guns to protect themselves. People that agree with this are people that are strong believers of the second amendment. The Founding Fathers agreed that everyone should have the right to protect ourselves and how can everyone protect themselves if the law is preventing them from buying a gun. If they lessen the laws, more people could protect themselves and would make people less likely to do any mass shootings. The Washington Post also says that the “Supreme Court’s landmark 2008 ruling that the Constitution protects an individual right to a gun for self-protection” (par 9). The Supreme Court agrees with the media’s view on loosening the laws. The Washington Post also said that “many guns used in crime appear to come from a few ‘bad apple’ dealers” (par 8). A lot of the muggings, the robberies, and the mass shootings that involve guns a lot of the times come from bad dealers. The guns are sold by some dealers under the table or from the black market. Most people that try to get guns through discreet channels probably have an alternative motive than to have for personal protection or for hunting uses.

The final idea that the media portrays is that we should give all teachers guns to protect the class. The Huffington Post (2013) said that we need to be self-responsible and “arm school officials and give them a fighting chance” (par 3). They say that “arming our teachers and training them how to properly use a firearm will translate to less heinous acts” (par 5). If we are teachers, it might have the same effect as putting armed guards into the schools. If we have armed teachers in every classroom, people that are going to do a mass shooting might think twice or even if they do go along with the shooting, the armed teacher will give the class a fighting chance. The Huffington post tells us about the Pearl High School shooting in 1997 when “an assistant principal, how was armed, intervened and held the shooter at gun point until police arrived, and probably prevented more people from being killed” (par 7). This is just one example of how it would be beneficial to arm all the school officials. Gunman can do a lot of damage in the 10 mins that you are waiting for the police to respond. The Huffington Post is very in favor of this idea to the point of saying that “carrying a firearm will become a requirement for all teachers and school administrators. If teachers aren’t comfortable with that they’re going to have to find a new profession” (par 8). If teachers don’t feel comfortable carrying a gun and willing to shoot a gunman then they better not be a teacher.

There are people that are dead set against arming teachers as well. Some teachers may not want to have the responsibility of carrying a gun. Teachers may think that they went through many years of college and extra trainings to be a teacher and not to become a teacher and part of the militia. Another fear is that giving teachers that extra responsibility is that teachers are very busy as it is now and they don’t need to have the added responsibility or a gun. It might take away from their teaching if they have to be recertified every other year to carry a gun in schools. Likewise, other people may not want to force teachers to carry a gun. Some teachers aren’t necessarily the most mentally stable or are too old and shaky to be handling a gun. You wouldn’t want a teacher that was old and shaky that can barely hold up a gun to protect the children. And you wouldn’t want a mentally unstable teacher to have a gun around children. You don’t want to have a teacher that is having a really bad day just go nuts and pull a gun out on a class just because the wont be quiet.

These are just a few examples on how the media portrays ideas such as gun rights after events like Sandy hook. Sometimes it is necessary for the media to give their opinions on a subject because some people, quite frankly, don’t know how to think for themselves. If someone hears something like the mass shooting at Sandy Hook most people will come to the conclusion that it was a terrible thing that happened. That’s a good thing that they figured that out but they don’t know what to think next. They don’t know what the best course of action should be. In this case people can learn from the media but they only get one side of the idea and not both. I think that it is important for the media to portray all the ideas to the viewers and not just their own. Unless you have a lot of time and want to watch a bunch of different channels to get all the facts.

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